

J.A.P. Architects

Planning Application

**Re-development of site known as
Cherry Cottage, Stoke Road, Clare**

DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 The Site & The Applicant

1.1 A location plan and site assessment are provided at drawings 23025-01 & 02.

1.2 Cherry Cottage is a detached, 2-storey house located at Stoke Road, at the edge of the Suffolk town of Clare.

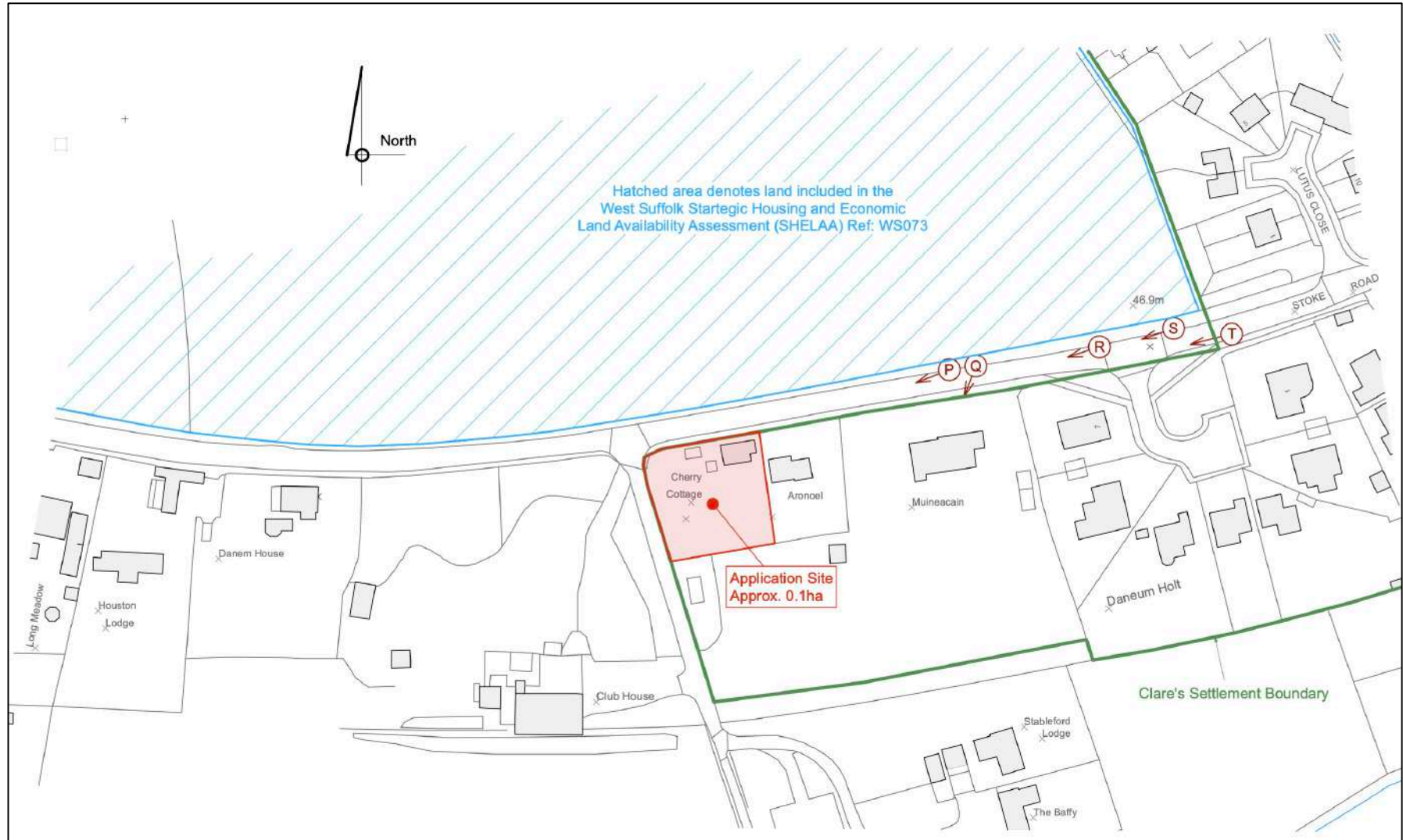


Figure 1: Extract of Location Plan



Figure 2: Front Elevation of Cherry Cottage



Figure 3: View of existing house when entering Clare from the west

- 1.3 The existing house stands in a generous residential plot measuring circa 0.1 ha, with principle dimensions of circa 32m side-to-side and 33m front-to-back. The plot is located within (and at the west end of) Clare's settlement boundary, but is separated by some distance from the local conservation area. There are no listed buildings in the vicinity.
- 1.4 While of a traditional form, with rendered walls and a slate roof, the house has modern windows and its appearance is considered to be unattractive. Architecturally, the existing house is unremarkable.

1.5 It is unclear exactly how old the house is but map evidence shows that Cherry Cottage was once part of a row of 5 cottages, known as 'Umbrella row' (probably erected in the late C19). Its current form was constructed from the two cottages at the western end of that row, at which time the remaining three cottages were taken down. This work took place at around the time the modern housing estate, known as Westfields, was constructed (circa 1960's/70's). Westfields is located on the opposite side of the road, approximately 250m. east of the site.

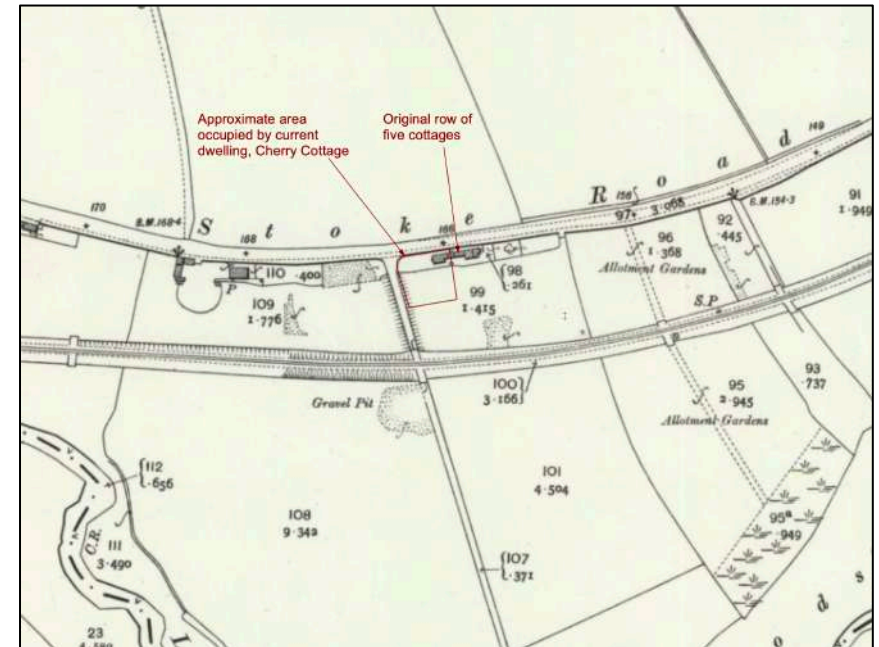


Figure 4: Map extract from late C19

- 1.6 To the east of Cherry Cottage is a modern, 2-storey house, known as Arnoel, further on from which is a large bungalow known as Muineacain. Further east is a modern cul-de-sac, known as Daneum Holt, after which are various semi-detached and detached dwellings that eventually run into Nethergate Street.
- 1.7 To the west of the site, set back from the road, is Clare Golf Course and Clubhouse and further west are detached dwellings known as Daneum House (set close to the road) and Houston Lodge (set well back from the road). These two detached dwellings form part of a linear grouping of 8, relatively large, dwellings at the western end of the town's boundary.
- 1.8 To the south of the site is a small commercial building (a car repair workshop) and further south, towards the River Stour, is a small group of large, modern detached dwellings.
- 1.9 To the north, on the opposite side of Stoke Road, is arable farmland. However, it is our understanding that a large area of this land is identified in the West Suffolk Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) ref: WS073 parcel — refer to Location/Site Analysis drawing 23025-01.
- 1.10 Overall, the character along this part of Stoke Road comprises linear development with significant variation in dwelling sizes, styles and building separation.

1.11 The site's topography is distinctive: the existing house stands on a plateau set approximately 1 meter lower than the adjacent highway (Stoke Road). A retaining wall runs along the front/north boundary, continuing east in front of the neighbour, Aronoel. The site drops significantly, front to back, by over 3m, to its southern boundary (site cross sections are provided at drawing 23025-02; extract below).

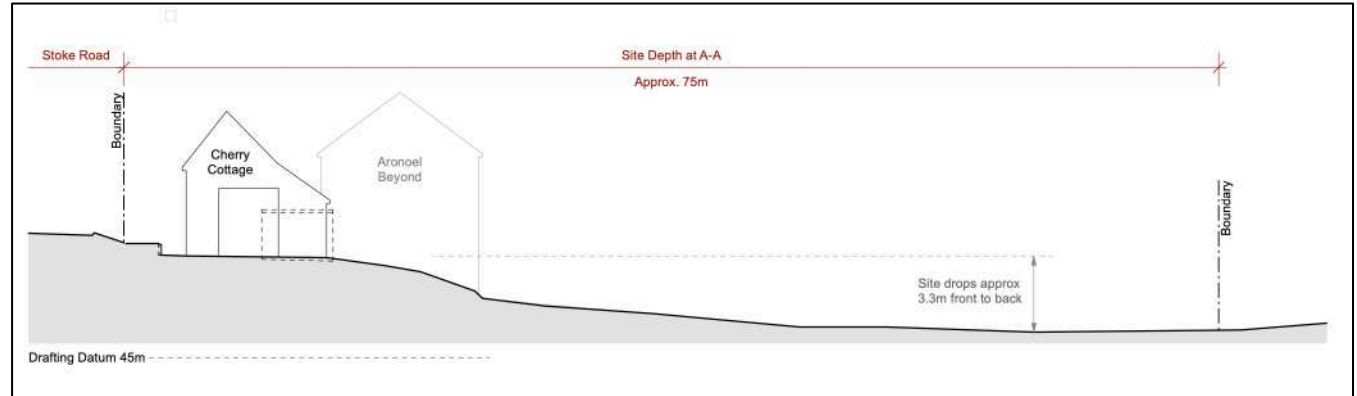


Figure 5: Typical site cross-section showing falls front to back

1.12 The sloping site continues at the rear of the neighbour, Aronoel. As shown at Figure 6, the 'ground floor' of the neighbour is set very high to the rear terraces and garden, which drops away (partly necessitating what is a quite unusual set of steps up to patio doors).



Figure 6: Rear façade of Aronoel

1.13 Tree planting within the site is sparse, limited to some small, poor quality domestic garden trees, but there is a grouping of larger trees beyond the south west corner of the site, which serve largely to screen the car workshop from view.

1.14 While retaining its original location (as part of the historic row of 5 cottages), by comparison to most local development, Cherry Cottage is positioned very close to the highway. The impact of the highway is intensified by its high level relative to the house (the road is approximately level with the cottage's ground floor window cill).

1.15 The site has a long established access at its north west corner, taken from an access road that leads south, from the main highway, to the Golf Club and the larger dwellings further south. The access road appears on maps dating back to the mid/late C19. There is a small informal hardstanding area between Cherry Cottage and its access, though parking and vehicle manoeuvrability is very limited (at present cars cannot turn on site and often have to leave the site in reverse gear).

1.16 The majority of the rear garden is laid to lawn, much of which banks up from the south towards the plateau on which the existing cottage stands, also banking up to the access track that runs along the western boundary. At the south side of Cherry Cottage is a raised terrace area, adjacent to the lower level gardens. Beside the terrace is a modern, raised pond structure (now dry and full of rubble) and a small brick outbuilding.



Figure 7: East gable of existing house seen from the front of the neighbouring building, Aronoel



Figure 8: Rear aspect of the existing house

- 1.17 The site — along with the two neighbouring houses, Muineacain and Arnoel —is currently owned by the Bareham family, who have connections with the town of Clare going back hundreds of years. The Barehams are historically connected to many local businesses: they built many houses in Clare over several centuries and at one time ran two local public houses.
- 1.18 Until recently, Cherry Cottage was let, for nearly 60 years, to friends of the Bareham family, but it is now unoccupied.
- 1.19 Cherry Cottage has not been modified or updated for many years — it is an unattractive building, but occupies a prominent position in the street scene. With the previously long residential let having ceased, the owners are hoping to dispose of the site for redevelopment.
- 1.20 A Pre-Application process was originally undertaken on behalf of the Bareham family (see below). Since then, conveyance proceedings have been commenced with Pryke Developments, a local development company — accordingly, Pryke Developments are the ‘applicant’ for this application.

- 2.2 With each option, we proposed to remove the existing house and to position new houses further back from the highway (generally adopting the building line of the immediate neighbour). Each option utilised the existing access at the north west corner, creating a parking and turning area in front of the new dwellings.
- 2.3 An important aspect — an opportunity — arising from our site analysis was to exploit the site’s unusual topography, creating a ‘lower ground’ level that would be obscured from the public realm and would create better access to rear garden amenity areas – see Figure 6.

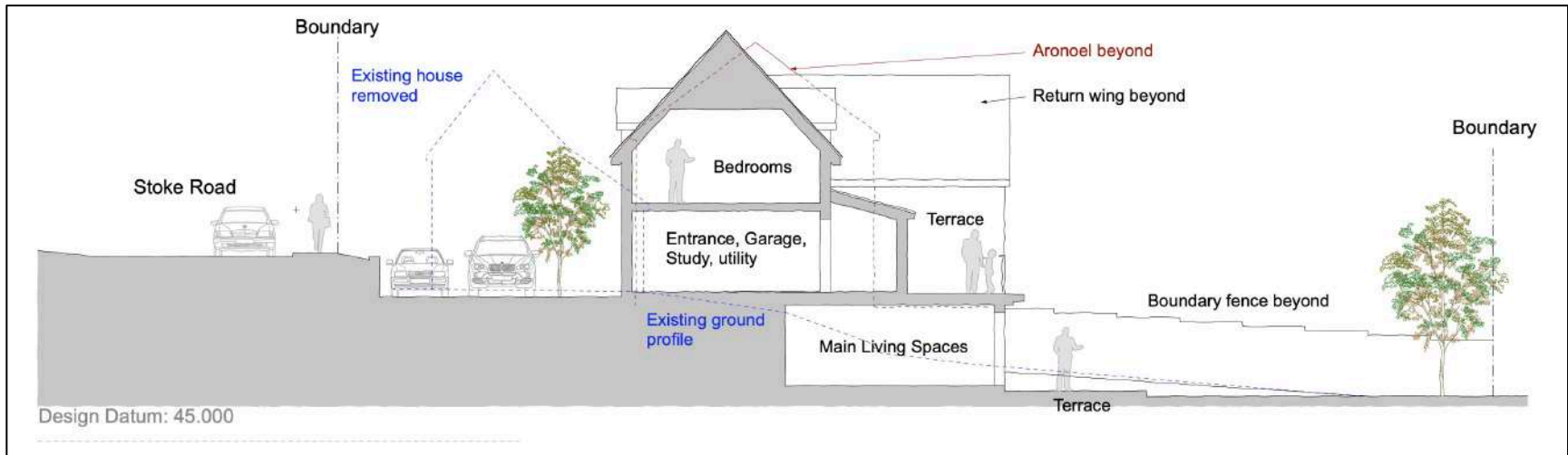


Figure 12: Typical section study, submitted with Pre-App package, showing how the existing topography can accommodate a ‘lower ground’ level

- 2.4 Street scene massing studies were prepared for each development option, though final design and external appearance was reserved for a later detailed design & planning application process.
- 2.5 All three options sought to create eaves and ridge lines that are similar to that of the immediate neighbour at Aronoel and the perceived height and massing would be reduced by the relative high level of the public highway. The stepped-back building line would create a more open frontage and mitigate the prominence in the street scene when approaching from the east and west along Stoke Road.
- 2.6 A Pre-App site meeting, with planning officer Edward Fosker, was held on 16th December 2021. The discussions were positive and Mr Fosker provided his written response in March 2022 (ref: PREAPP/21/442).
- 2.7 Mr Fosker provided a response for all three sketch options — in general his preference was for a two dwelling scheme, though some concerns were raised with the size of the proposed houses.

- 2.8 Mr Fosker made no direct reference to the split-level concept (something we had made central to resolving a ‘site-responsive’ solution). However, this aspect had been discussed in detail at the site meeting and our understanding is that it was accepted as an innovative and appropriate approach to dealing with the site topography.
- 2.9 Following on from the Pre-Application process, the Bareham family have looked to a local and well respected developer — Pryke Developments — to take ownership of the site and bring forward a new development to replace Cherry Cottage.
- 2.10 J.A.P. Architects have been engaged by Pryke Developments to progress a scheme for *two dwellings* and this is described in detail below.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 Detailed proposals are provided at drawings 23025-03 to 08.
- 3.2 Full planning consent is sought to remove the existing house and replace it with two, new and very high quality houses.
- 3.3 The new houses will be set back from the highway, in harmony with the building line established at the neighbouring property (Aronoel). The set back will improve the relationship to the public realm and create an appropriate area for parking and new landscaping.

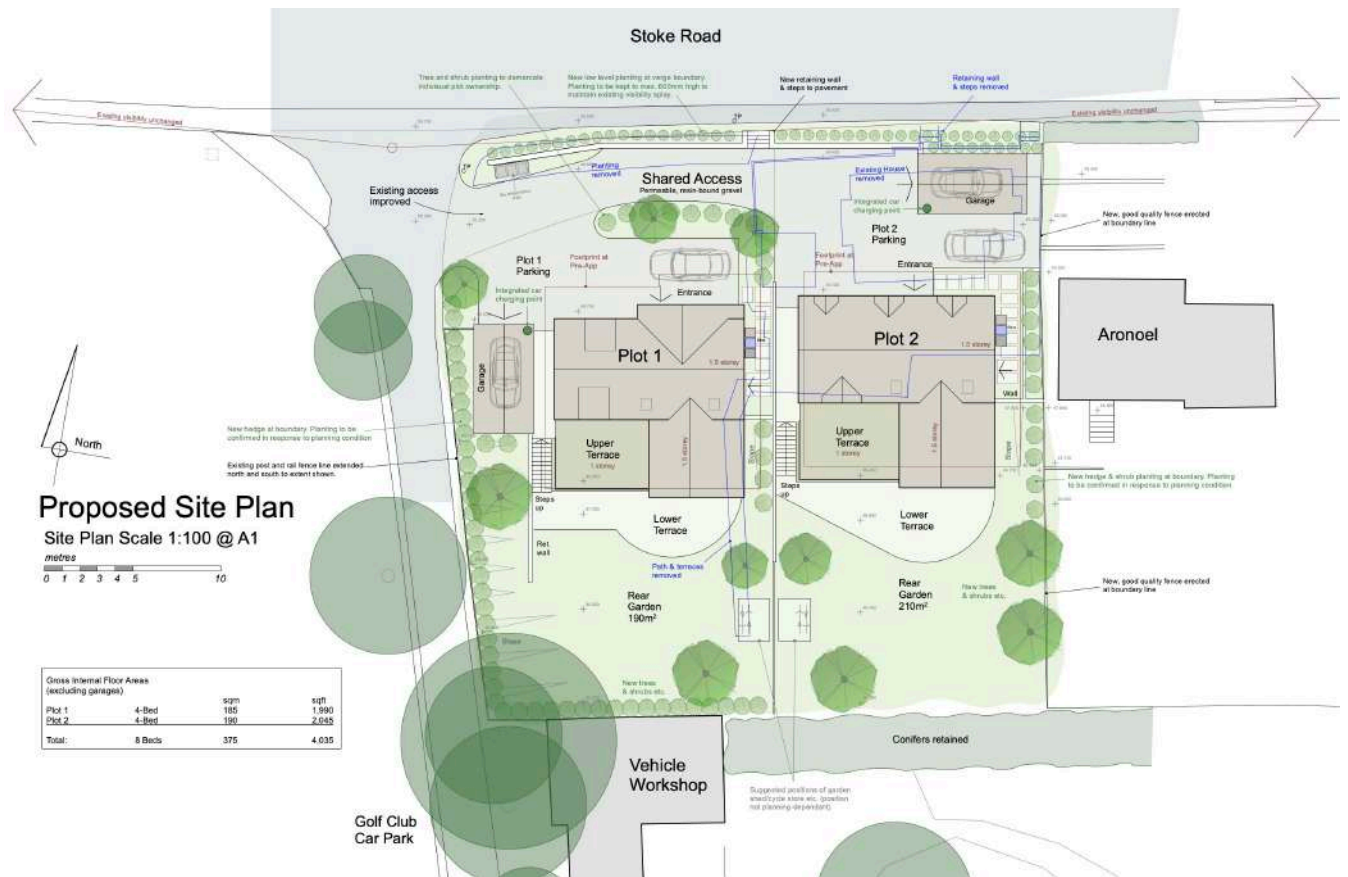


Figure 13: Extract of proposed Site Plan

3.4 The frontage area will be set at the approximate level of the existing house and the existing retaining wall to the highway will be rebuilt to incorporate a planted verge and stepped pedestrian access up to the pavement.

3.5 Based on the concept established through the Pre-App process, both new houses will be arranged over 3 levels to account for the existing topography, linking the relative frontage and rear garden levels. As shown at Figure 14, the resultant cross-section retains a 1.5 storey building scale at the front, then steps down, with the site, to create a single & 1.5 storey building scale relative to the rear gardens.

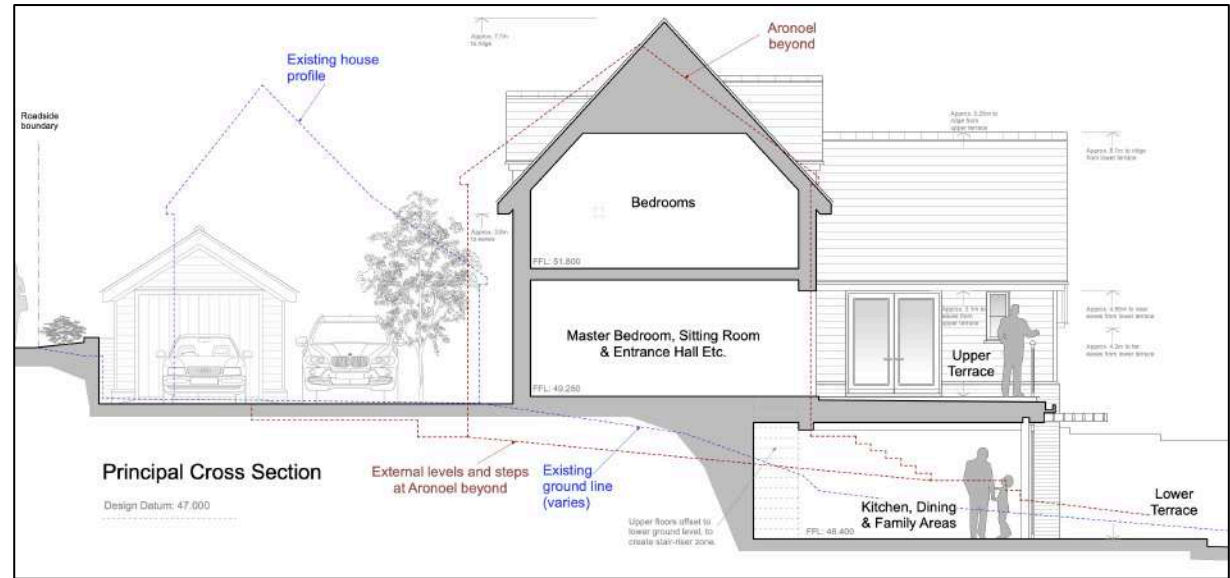


Figure 14: Extract of proposed cross-section

3.6 Both new houses adopt the split level concept and have similar internal arrangements. However, the designs are subtly different to add visual interest, particularly at the elevation facing the public realm.



Figure 15: Extract of proposed street scene

- 3.7 As shown above, the two houses have ridge levels that step up from the neighbouring building (Aronoel). However, this step in height reflects the rising topography going east to west; *the new houses are in fact slightly less high at the front — measured from the relative ground-level — than the neighbour.*
- 3.8 The principal entrance will be to the middle floor, though it will appear as a traditional, ground floor entrance at the front elevation. We have described this level as ‘Ground Floor’, as it relates directly to the frontage ground levels and also to a raised roof terrace at the rear (the dropped level, relating to the lower, rear gardens is referred to as ‘Lower Ground Floor’).

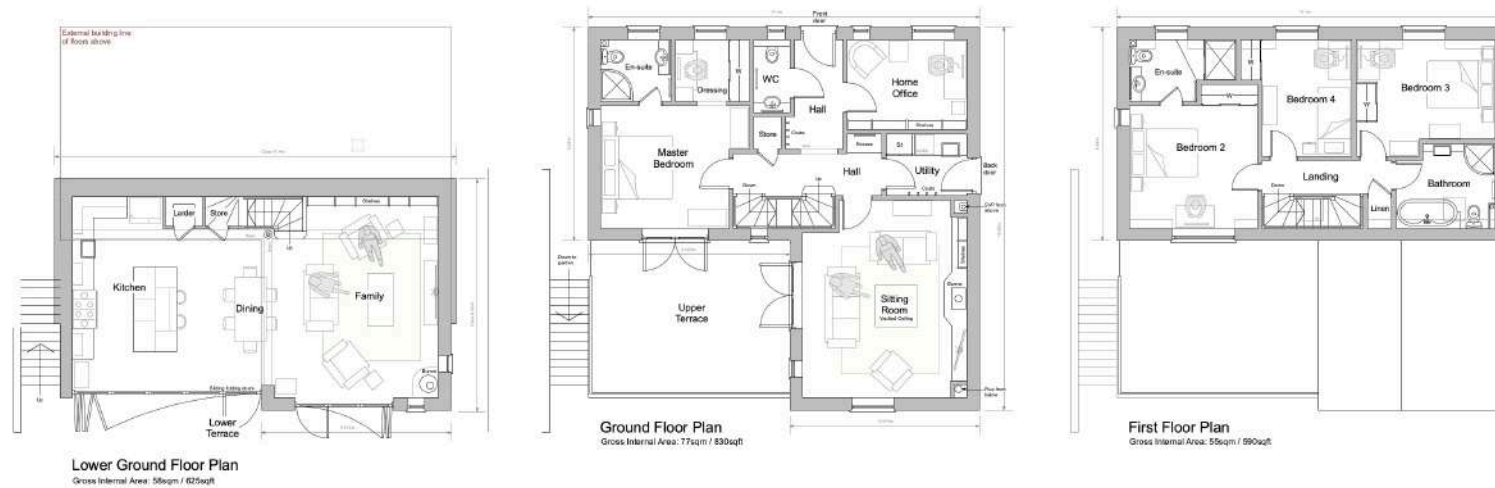


Figure 16: Extract of typical floor plans

- 3.8 Both new plots will have an accessible Master Bedroom Suite at the ‘Ground Floor’ which will have direct access to the spacious ‘upper terrace’. A large sitting room will also open to the upper terrace and other ground floor spaces include a home office, a WC and a utility room.
- 3.9 The stair will descend to the Lower Ground Floor, which is essentially ‘earth- sheltered’ at three sides. It is offset from the floors above to reflect the site topography and it will comprise an open-plan, day-to-day living hub with a kitchen, dining and sitting areas, all opening out to the south-facing gardens.
- 3.10 At first floor level, set partly within the roof volume, each house will have 3 further bedrooms and a family bathroom.
- 3.11 As can be seen at the proposed site plan, the houses have been designed with a vertically- and horizontally-stepped footprint. This is intended to bring mutual privacy to both dwellings and the neighbour to the east. The building shape orientates the upper terrace to the south west, with screening to the east achieved with a 1.5 storey rear projection.

3.12 The rear projection has an asymmetric pitched roof to create a low eaves line to its eastern flank, rising away from the respective neighbours. The extract below shows this arrangement at Plot 2, which is closest to Aronoel. It can be seen that Aronoel has various steps & terraces that also step significantly to its lower, rear garden.



Figure 17: Extract of Plot 2 rear elevation

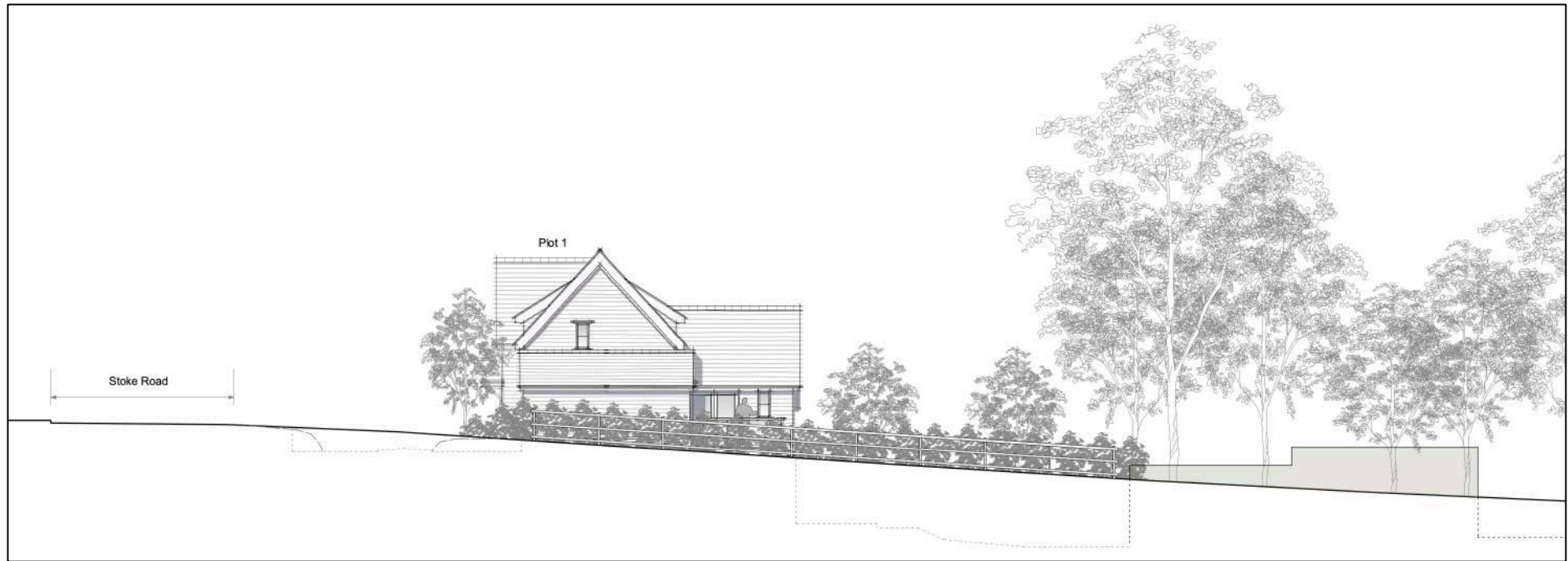


Figure 18: Plot 1 Elevation to access road

- 3.13 At Plot 1, adjacent to the existing access road, the lower ground floor and rear gardens are effectively out of sight, set at the naturally occurring levels within the lower part of the site. Additional hedge planting proposed at the boundary. This will draw focus to the upper, 1.5 storey elements, with the lower level and rear gardens being obscured from public view.
- 3.14 High quality materials and authentic traditional detailing will create an attractive appearance and will enhance the entry to Clare from the west. Full details will be confirmed in response to planning conditions, but the following summarises the applicant's intent:
- | | |
|---------|---|
| Walls | Light coloured boarding above a good quality facing brick plinth. |
| Roof | Natural slate |
| Joinery | Blue-grey powder-coated aluminium |

3.15 Each plot will have a modest single garage constructed of similar materials and positioned to create an appropriate zones for turning etc. The garages will also reinforce the sense of partial enclosure brought from the front retaining wall. With Plot 1, the garage is located next to the house; at Plot 2, it is located in front of the house, parallel to the street. While sometimes considered intrusive into the street scene, if carefully arranged, such a relationship can enhance a small-scale ‘sense of place’ and containment. As shown below, we have used a similar approach very successfully at similar developments, recently constructed in the centre of Clare, at Cavendish Road and in its neighbouring village, Stoke By Clare.



Figure 19: Recent examples of frontage garage building reinforcing a contained sense of place. Cavendish Road, Clare and Ashen Road, Stoke By Clare; designed by J.A.P. Architects

4.0 Access

- 4.1 Vehicular access to the site will be retained at the north west corner, taken from the long established access road joining perpendicular to Stoke Road.
- 4.2 Each plot will have space for at least 3 cars to park and to turn on site to leave in a forward gear (at present the limited parking area for Cherry Cottage necessitates reversing onto the adjacent access road).
- 4.3 Pedestrian access to the street can be by way of the shared access area, at the north west corner, or via new steps, which will be located centrally in the frontage retaining wall.

- 4.4 Principal access points to the house are legible and level paving is taken to a side entrance and points of access to & from the Upper Terrace.
- 4.5 The site topography makes level access to the main rear gardens impossible, but the Upper Terrace provides a generous outdoor amenity space accessible from the Ground Floor level. The main rear gardens will be accessed externally via linear steps and from the main, lower-ground living spaces, via wide glazed doors.
- 5.0 **Trees and Landscaping**
- 5.1 The new houses are positioned such that Plot 2 largely corresponds to existing areas of the site that are already ‘developed’ or that are surfaces with hardstanding material. While the overall footprint of hardstanding surface will increase, through the net gain of one house, a good proportion of the site will be retained as green space. This will comprise generous areas of lawn and new tree and shrub planting at the rear gardens, but also targeted zones of planting of the front, including low-level verge planting and tree/hedge planting to demarcate zones of ownership.
- 5.2 The existing site is virtually devoid of trees. Only one small fruit tree will need to be removed to make way for the development. The existing, mature tree planting to the south and west of the site are beyond the site boundaries and so shall be retained. Additional, new tree planting is proposed — shown indicatively on the proposed site plan — and all relevant tree planting etc. will be confirmed in response to planning conditions.
- 5.3 The front parking and turning areas will be finished in a permeable topping, most likely a resin-bound aggregate. Other paths and terraces will be finished with selected stone slabs laid with open joints.

6.0 Responding to officer's Pre-App Remarks

- 6.1 At the Pre-Application stage, in respect of Sketch Option 2 (two dwellings) planning officer Ed Fosker stated the following:
- Option 2 proposes two detached dwellings positioned side by side, and better reflects the spacious character in this part of the settlement. The dwellings remain noticeably taller than those adjoining, and taller than the existing dwelling, and plot 1 in particular contains a wide frontage and plot 2 a deep and visually prominent flank. I do think the site is capable of accommodating two dwellings but I have some concerns that this iteration is not the optimal solution in terms of respecting the otherwise spacious character that exists at and close to this site on this sensitive edge of settlement plot and that smaller dwellings would be a better solution.*
- 6.2 The detailed proposals submitted here have sought to address key aspects of the above statement. The width of each plot has been reduced by 12% and 10% respectively, with spacing between dwellings increased accordingly. The overall size of the proposed dwellings has also reduced. At Pre-Application stage, the proposed Plots 1 & 2 had floor areas of 240m² and 230m². These have been reduced to 185m² and 190m² respectively; a 20% reduction overall (see dotted red line on drawing 23025-03 and diagram below).
- 6.3 As set out in Part 3.0 above, the issue of building height has been addressed and clarified: while taller to the ridge than Cherry Cottage, the two proposed houses are actually less high than the immediate neighbour, Aronoel. The relative step up in ridge is more a factor of the topography of Stoke Road, which gently rises, going west at this point.
- 6.4 Also explained above at Part 3.0, the perception of building mass and depth is mitigated by the design working with the site's distinct topography, in parallel with using elemental hierarchy and articulation to create stepped massing, both horizontally and vertically.

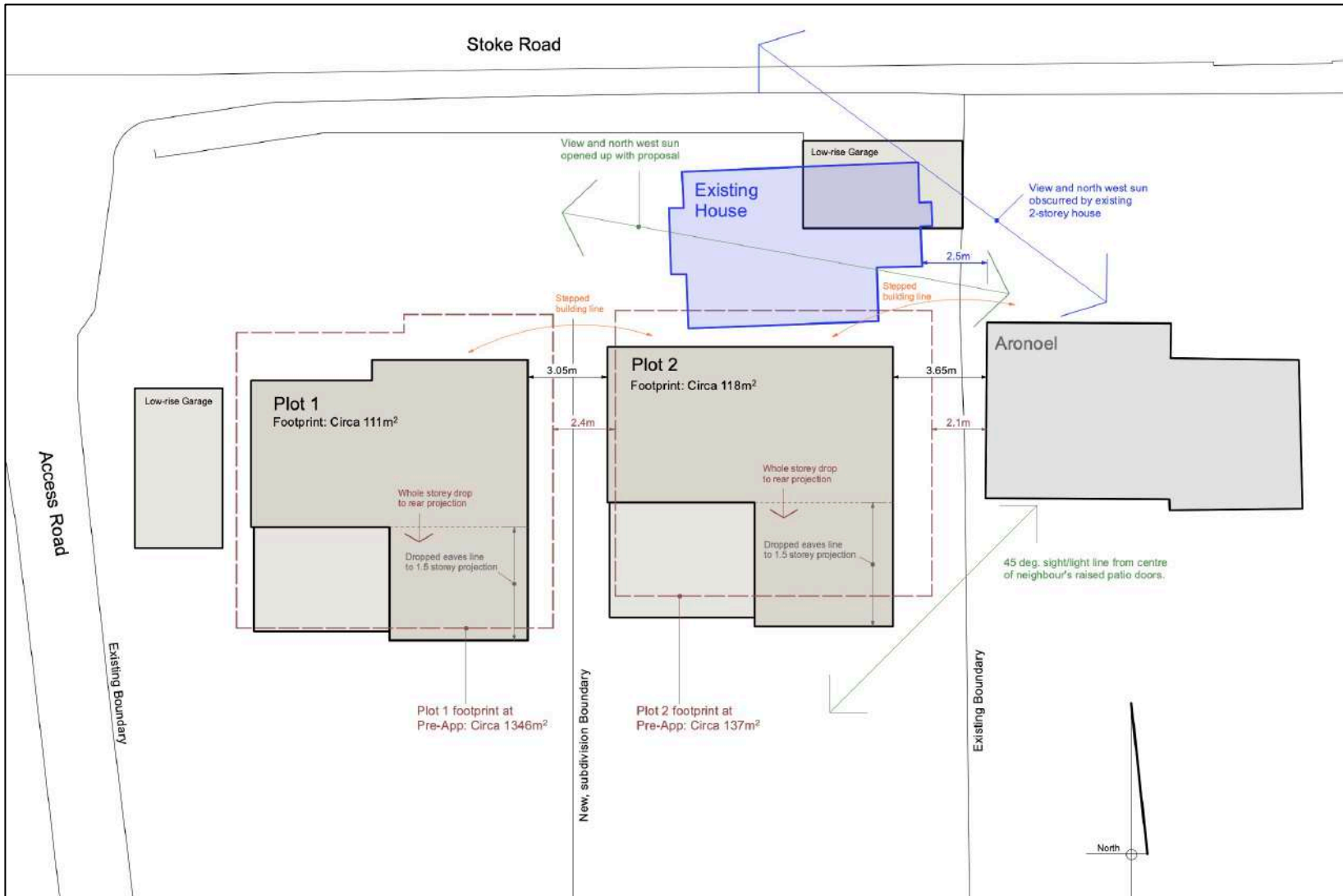


Figure 20: Spacing/density diagram

- 6.5 While the proposal will increase development density, the proposed spacing and sense of grouping will reflect that between the existing house and the immediate neighbour, Arnoel., The proposal also removes the overbearing gable of Cherry Cottage (see Figure 20 above) creating a greater sense of openness to the front of Arnoel. It is also worth noting that the proposal reflects the historical grouping of cottages of the site, originally known as Umbrella Row.

- 6.6 Being located within the settlement boundary, we contend that two new family houses as shown, represents a sustainable use of previously developed land; they are commensurate in size with neighbouring houses and both will benefit from a generous garden plot.
- 6.7 We would agree with Mr Fosker, that the site is located at what, in some respects, could be considered a *sensitive, edge of settlement plot*. It is for this reason that we have sought to significantly improve the visual quality of built development on this site, compared to what exists. The design is bespoke and site-responsive, but also draws on key aspects of local vernacular, to create two distinctive houses. We have followed a similar approach to that implemented at the recently constructed development in the centre of Clare, at Cavendish Road, (a *very sensitive site*), planning ref: DC/16/1725/FUL, where we sought to increase the development density, while maintaining appropriate spacing etc.



Figure 21: Recently constructed development of 3 new houses in lieu of 1 original house in Cavendish Road, Clare. Designed by J.A.P. Architects

- 6.8 In accordance with Mr Fosker’s Pre-Application remarks, we have put together a comprehensive planning application, that includes detailed supporting statements and third-party reports. However, we do not agree that a heritage statement is required — the site is not in a conservation area and does not involve (or impact upon) any heritage assets. We have provided an assessment of the site and the existing building. For the same reasons, we contend that fully detailed joinery details are also not required — the joinery is specified as powder-coated aluminium.

6.9 Our supporting statement includes a section on Trees & Landscaping (Part 5.0). However, we contend that a separate, arboricultural survey and impact assessment is not required as no trees will be affected (save for one small, poor quality fruit tree which is to be removed — consent for which is not required).

7.0 **Planning Policy**

7.1 There are a number of local planning policies relevant to this proposal. These are set out below with accompanying narrative describing how compliance is achieved.

DM1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development & DM7 Sustainable Design and Construction

- The proposal to replace a very poor quality and inefficient house with two modern houses within the settlement boundary of Clare and close to numerous amenities, is inherently sustainable.

DM2 Creating Places Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness

- The proposed design is of a very high quality — it is site-responsive and creates a small-scale sense of place, while also responding to key aspects of local and historical vernacular.

DM11 Protected Species & DM12 Mitigation, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity

- A Preliminary Ecological appraisal is provided separately with this application. Refer also to Part 8.0 of this statement.

DM13 Landscape Features

- The landscaping, relating to both the private and public realms, will significantly improve and there will be biodiversity net gains achieved through the new tree planting etc.

DM22 Residential Design

- The residential design will be of a very high quality. The proposed houses are not ‘standard’, or from a developer list of ‘house types’. Instead, they are unique — bespoke layouts responding to the physical site and the locality.

DM46 Parking Standards

- The proposal greatly improves on the existing on-site parking and turning arrangements.
- Parking standards will be met and highway safety will be improved.

Core Strategy Policy CS1 – St Edmundsbury Spatial Strategy

- The proposal will provide good quality family homes within Clare’s settlement boundary, on previously developed land. The local historic environment will be enhanced and the local natural environment will be unharmed.

Core Strategy Policy CS2 – Sustainable Development

- The proposal makes good use of previously developed land.
- Biodiversity will be protected (enhanced through new tree planting and bat boxes etc.)
- The new houses will meet and exceed all up to date requirements of the Building Regulations.
- The development will incorporate water use reduction measures including airflow taps, dual flush cisterns and water butts. The proposed dwellings are of a moderate size and the fittings will be designed to adhere to Policy DM7 (max 110 litres per person per day). No fitting will exceed the values set out in table 1 of that policy.
- Solar water heating and/or photovoltaic panels could be appropriate for this site, given the south facing aspect. However, the final specification, in terms of heat and power, will be subject to future input from a specialist services consultant. It is also the applicant's intention to discuss solar panel options with the potential purchasers and to implement solar installation to suite their desires and needs.
- Where white electrical goods are provided these will be 'A' rated for energy efficiency.
- The dwellings will be fitted throughout with Energy Efficient light bulbs.
- The dwellings will have ample space for dry recyclables etc.

Core Strategy Policy CS3 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

- The proposals will not impact on any heritage assets or conservation areas.
- The housing density is appropriate for the location and reflects historic development.
- The proposals have been carefully designed and are site-responsive.

8.0 Ecology

- 8.1 Skilled Ecology have undertaken a Preliminary Ecological appraisal for the site. Their report, dated 2023, is included with this application.
- 8.2 Skilled Ecology's report concludes that the site *is generally considered low in ecological value the risk of presence and significant impact to protected, priority or rare species of notable habitats was low.*
- 8.3 Despite the low ecological value, Skilled Ecology set out various precautionary measures to be adhered to through the construction phase, as well as suggesting additional ecological enhancements, including the inclusion of bird and bat boxes (refer to Parts 4.0 & 5.0 of their report). The applicant will observe and include all recommendations from Skilled Ecology and in accordance with any associated planning conditions.

9.0 Summary

- 9.1 The existing house at Cherry Cottage is of very limited architectural or heritage merit. It is all that remains of a once larger terrace and it has been much altered. Despite its C19 origins, it is not a good or rare example of vernacular architecture; it is unattractive and does not positively contribute to the built environment along Stoke Road.
- 9.2 An opportunity exists to significantly enhance the appearance of this part of Stoke Road through the removal of the existing building and a modest development of high quality housing, sustainably located within Clare's settlement boundary.
- 9.3 Our proposals are based on a comprehensive site analysis, which has informed a design-led approach to achieve a bespoke, distinctive and site-responsive development.
- 9.4 The proposals follow on from a detailed and positive Pre-Application process: We have taken on board officer advice to resolve a very high-standard proposal worthy of its position at the edge of Clare.
- 9.5 These proposals have been very carefully considered and we commend them to the council.

L. Frere

For and on behalf of J.A.P Architects

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